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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Economic Effects of the War upon Women and Children in Great Britain. By IRENE OSGOOD ANDREWS, assisted by MARGARETT A. HOBBS. New York: Oxford University Press, 1918. Pp. x+190.

Mrs. Andrews' monograph is one of a series of "Preliminary Economic Studies of the War," published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and edited by David Kinley. It is a record of women's work in Great Britain for the first three years of the war and constitutes a comprehensive account of a significant chapter of industrial history. It takes the form of a documentary study of official and other sources of material, chiefly the reports and orders issued by the Ministry of Munitions and the Home Office, the *Labour Gazette*, and various publications of women's labor organizations. Very naturally it is written from the author's point of view as a person primarily interested in labor legislation. Little information is given as to the actual processes performed by women and the resulting changes in the organization of the manufacturing industries, or concerning any aspect of the economic effects of the war upon women and children outside this field.

After a survey of the place of women and children in industry before the war, Mrs. Andrews shows how they were affected by the successive changes which it brought. A pressing problem in the first months of the war was that of finding work for the large numbers of women who had been thrown out of their customary employments. This situation was not at first recognized as merely temporary, and an extensive relief organization was set up for dealing with it. By the summer of 1915 the shortage of men in many mechanical and clerical occupations and in transportation had led to the substitution of women. In the fall of that year the great rush of women to the manufacture of munitions began and by 1916 it was said that one woman in every seven at work was taking the place of a man. A shortage of workers in the more customary women's occupations became acute. The third year of the war saw not only a great increase in the number making munitions but also in many non-industrial occupations and in the army of women performing many kinds of service behind the lines in France. It was estimated that the

total increase was in 1917 more than a million over the number of women employed before the war.

The women workers in war industries were drawn first from the industries of their traditional employment, a transfer "from slack to busy lines." In the second place, a large number of married women who had formerly been wage-earners returned to industry. To a lesser extent than was generally supposed the leisure-class women also became regular workers on war materials.

A major part of the report is appropriately devoted to a discussion of hours and wages. The gradual restoration of shorter hours in the interest of industrial efficiency, after the limiting legislation had been almost swept away at the beginning of the war, was one of the valuable lessons of the English experience, and was of great assistance to the effort made in America to maintain working standards. The average weekly schedules of from 52 to 54 hours said to be in operation for munition workers in 1917 were even shorter than the pre-war legal requirement. The author notes, however, that the abolition of night work was never recommended by the Ministry during this period, although its evil effects were clearly recognized.

The questions arising from "dilution" and the determination of what new lines of skilled work women should be permitted to do in the face of trade-union opposition were not satisfactorily adjusted. Most of these centered about the Munitions of War Act of 1915 and its amendments. Almost every provision of the act underwent constant criticism from labor sources. Official indorsement of the principle of "equal pay" was repeatedly made but its enforcement or lack of enforcement was the occasion of endless contention. The fact that the work was in most cases modified and rearranged for women's labor made difficulties of a practical nature as to just what work was "equal." The whole policy of the Ministry of Munitions was repeatedly objected to on the grounds that it was not general in application, that the rates fixed were made standard and not minimum, that the recommendations were not obeyed, and that rates were cut.

The actual earnings of women workers increased as the war progressed, but the question is raised whether the rising costs of the third year did not wholly absorb this increase. In the early months of the war 15 shillings was said to be a common weekly rate in the Clyde district. In June, 1917, the Minister of Munitions stated that 25 shillings was the average weekly wage of women in munition works. Mrs. Andrews' comment is that the latter is "sufficiently high if accurate

to denote compliance with the orders [fixing rates],” a comment probably made by way of showing some charity to the Ministry of Munitions, after faithfully recording all the hostility its rulings aroused. Nobody knows better than Mrs. Andrews that an *average* is no evidence at all that a specified rate was generally paid.

The conclusion is reached that the effects of the war on the child workers of Great Britain, so far as they could be judged at the time the report was written, were to be deplored from the point of view of mental and moral as well as from that of physical development. For women, on the other hand, the bad effects were perhaps only temporary and were more than offset by a certain enhancement of the personality of the woman worker. In doing the new work at higher wages women have become more critical and more alert. They are ready to enter upon many suitable new occupations and are gainers through their war experience. This indication of benefits resulting from war work has implications possibly not appreciated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which states that its aim in these monographs of the effects of war is “to furnish a basis for a judgment as to the reasonableness of the resort to it.”

The report is, on the whole, an admirable summary of the documentary evidence, and it is to be hoped that Mrs. Andrews will bring it up to date and add her own interpretations, now that she has had the opportunity to study the situation in England at first hand.

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